

SOME FURTHER
THOUGHTS on TRADE.

In a LETTER to the
Honourable Mr. L.

S I R,

MY haſt to obey their Commands (who ought to have the greateſt Influence upon me) was the Occaſion of my omitting ſome material Things in my late Paper of Trade, and conſequently of this Rejoynder. If I am at all concern'd what Entertainment the World may give thoſe Propoſals, which you were pleas'd to honour with your Peruſal and Approbation: It is in pure Reſpect to your Judgment, which let me ſpeak it without Vanity, I have always found to exceed even any of thoſe whom Intereſt, and a much nearer Relation, ought to have better inſtructed. Not that I could allow my ſelf in any meaſure a competent Judge in a Matter where even my own Concerns have intereſted me, had I not been firſt made a Convert by your Reason and Argument; 'Tis to thoſe I ſtand indebted for many Inſights into Trade, and perhaps I have little in the whole to brag of, beſide my natural Sincerity, and a Willingneſs to ſerve my Native Country in my Station, to the very utmoſt of my Power.

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I must confess and acknowledge my self highly satisfied with that Spirit of Zeal, which seems to actuate our August Trustees in this Affair. Undoubtedly, as it is likely to issue to the greatest Advantage to this Nation, so it cannot fail of redounding much to the Honour of that Assembly, especially to that part who are most studious for the Good of their Country, in being most vigorous in their Resolutions, for the Benefit of Trade.

I have said I was hurried in my former Paper, and plain it is I was so ; or speaking of the Redress of Abuses of the *Custom-House*, I could not have omitted proposing by way of Remedy,

An ascertaining by Law all Fees to be paid the several Officers, with a full Explanation of them, and the Penalty of exceeding to be an utter Incapacity, as in my former Proposal. As also empowering that Honourable Board, immediately to repel any Officer, upon due Proof of his Guilt.

It will be no difficult matter to do this ; for the oldest Book of Rates will sufficiently show our Modern Encroachments, and if it be any where abstruse, or rendred dark by the selfish Interpretations of the Officers, the old Truth may easily come to light, by consulting the oldest Officers, together with the most experienc'd Merchants.

I confess to you, Sir, I have often lamented, and cannot excuse the (what shall I call it, for it is nothing less than) Imprudence of the Generality of our Merchants, who by leaving their Affairs wholly to the Management of idle Servants, have in a great measure, brought these Encroachments and Misusages upon us. For they by the Example of their Masters, leaving the Officer (above Stairs, as well as below) to do their
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Business, while they took what they call a Whet, or a Breakfast, at the Tavern, have made their Masters liable not only to their own Extravagancies, but to the Extortion of others. Thus the Evil began, and to a high degree it has ran; but I hope it cannot be thought suitable to the Justice of the Nation, that the Men of Business should suffer for not being able to stop a Torrent. Endeavours have been made after a Redress; but I perswade my self, it is reserv'd for this Parliament, to vindicate in this Affair, the Honour as well as Justice of the Nation. And tho' the Evil has begun in a great measure by the Remissness of some of us; yet I dare promise my self, when that August Assembly will please to give us the necessary Countenance, there will be found few amongst us of so mean a Spirit, as to sit down contented under a Dishonourable Burden.

Another Omission in that Paper, was speaking of the Ways and Methods to make our Trade extensive, in that sense, which is certainly most suitable to the Interest of the Nation, I forgot to offer, That as it was one ill Effect of every Person's running into Trade without Consideration, that Trade was thereby *at its only last Gasp, and consequently to be deserted by every cautious and considerate Merchant, unless on a new Foundation of Encouragement*: So it has been experienc'd to be an Evil naturally consequent, That those who by this great Decay of Trade, have been forc'd to use that necessary Precaution, have and will always lay out for Engrossments and Monopolies, as the only way left to employ their Estates in. And what Encouragement those give to Trade, will appear to any Man of Sense, who will give himself the Trouble to supervise our several Laws against Forestallments and

Monopolies. Laws good indeed in Intention, but not so full in their Penalties, to be able to give a curb to the Viciousness of Humane Nature.

I have above, Sir, call'd our present State a Decay of Trade, and I think it will easily appear to be such by what follows.

If Trade be the true Basis of these Kingdoms, and if the Trade of these Kingdoms be run to so low a Gasps, that it is as near Expiration as can be imagin'd, by the over-trading of our Subjects; certainly we ought to seek out some Cure (tho' desperate) to this desperate Evil.

I have propos'd what some old Laws has, I think, enforced: But I am sure, nothing more than what Reason and our present Circumstances do sufficiently plead for. But if the Under-jobber must devour the Profit of the Merchant without any Advantage to the Nation: Yet, I suppose, nothing can be offer'd why the *Jews* should eat the Bread out of the Mouths of the Natives of the Land. I cannot yet convince my self (and perhaps Reason cannot do it) That a Multitude of Unskilful Traders can be either for the Advantage or Honour of a Nation. They that can prove it by solid Reasons of Trade, I believe may be allow'd to have an excellent Knack at reconciling Contraries.

As for those who will judge by Appearances, and guess at the flourishing of Trade in a Nation, by the Customs paid by the Subject to the King, they run upon so false a Scent, that they hardly deserve Confutation.

For grant that the Customs amount to four Millions yearly. Who are these four Millions paid by? The King's Subjects? For what? Mostly goods imported (for

(for all that is laid on our own Manufactures exported, is undoubtedly far without the Argument). Then the Question will recurr: Are these four Millions a Loss, or a Gain to the Nation? And truly it is as easily answer'd, the Nation gains just so much as the King pays back for Exportation by *Debenture*; and all that is expended at Home, is as much a Loss to the Nation, as what a Country Gentleman over-spends his yearly Estate is to his Family.

Besides, the Case is more likely to stand thus, than as those Reasoners would have it.

A Multitude of Traders advance the Customs Two Millions; but by over-trading, one of those Two Millions is drawn back from the King, and by that, together with a high Duty and a bad Market, the Importer loses three. I would gladly know, where is the Advantage of the King's great Customs to the Nation?

Disquisitions of this Nature (if I had time) would soon lead us to a Determination of the true State of the Nations Interest, in this great Affair of Trade, and yet I am afraid, even that Labour with some sort of People would be utterly lost.

Another Omission, not the least material, was my not recommending to that Honourable Assembly, the erecting a Court of Merchants, to consist of five Persons (yearly elected, and three to make a Court) for the determining all Differences of Damages, &c. between Masters and Owners of Vessels and Freighters. The want of which, is so great a Detriment to Trade, as by the Merchants sometimes too great Demands, so by the Masters and Owners peremptory Sawciness, that it would be one of the best Institutions for the Advancement of Trade, that has pass'd for some Ages.

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The Method of Proceedings in this Court, and the natural Model thereof, is so obvious on that little already said of it, that I can hardly imagine it can meet with any Opposition.

1st, It would free the Fair Trader from the Turbulency of Masters, and from the ill Nature of the Owners, who being commonly a great Number, somewhat substantial, and consequently often proud, will choose oftentimes rather to lose the whole Freight in Expences at Law, to the double Damage of the Merchant, than to stand to a fair Arbitration, or make any Conscientious Allowance.

2^{dly}, Where a Master is well-meaning, and the Merchant (as there are litigious and querulous Men of all sorts) too oppressing and high in his Demands, it would secure to the said Master and Owners, their Freight upon reasonable and just Allowances, and neither (as it now often happens) could then esteem themselves competent or positive Judges in their own Cases. I think this Proposal cannot meet with any Opposition from any, unless the Gentlemen of the Long Robe; but I will flatter my self for once, That they will so far consult the Interest of their Country, in this one Advantage to Trade, that they will forward it for their own Vindication. I am sensible, Sir, I have detain'd you longer than I ought, from your more weighty Affairs; and yet my Passion for the Good of my Country, will not let me break off, without imparting to you my hearty Wishes, that our generous Trustees would (as a Method likely to be more successful than any of my poor Offers) Address
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our Royal Master, that his Commissioners of Trade may lay before them what Advances they have made for the Encouragement thereof. I have heard you, Sir, speak great (and on your experienc'd Sincerity, I dare averr them to be very just) things of that well-design'd Committee. But this is only the submissive Wish of

S I R,

While his own,

Your Humble

and Obedient Servant.

F I N I S.

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